

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

7A-14

Orleans

N

EAS.241,
242

Town/City: EASTHAM

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Campground Road Area

Photograph



Address: 20 Bay Road

Historic Name: Linus and Agnus Denison House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: [1913-1920]

Source: Title research, Eastham Tax Commitment Books

Style/Form: No Style

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete block

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Garage/shed (early-20th c., EAS.242, Photo 3)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

New windows, new locations for doors (ca. 2023, compare Cover Photo with Photo 2)

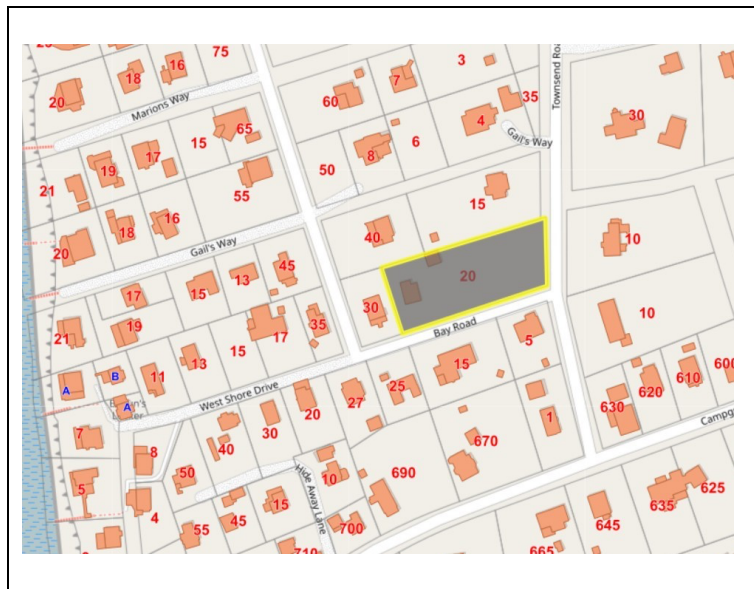
Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.61 acres

Setting: This property is located on a parcel bounded on the east by Townsend Avenue and on the south by Bay Road. The surrounding area was subdivided with small cottage lots starting in the early-20th century and now includes modest cottages and houses from the early-20th to the early-21st centuries. This larger parcel combines three parcels from a 1912 subdivision. This house sits on a rise at the west end of the parcel. A grass track leads to a garage/shed east of the house. The parcel is left in a natural state with trees and undergrowth of grass and ivy ground cover.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant, for

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2025

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

20 BAY ROAD

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

This modest house consists of a small, 1½-story, side-gable main block with an enclosed porch spanning the front elevation that has a shallower-pitched shed roof. The house rests on a raised concrete block foundation. The elevations are clad in weathered wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles with no projecting eaves (unusual for early-20th century cottages in Eastham). The front porch originally had a centered entrance which was removed during a recent renovation (compare Cover Photo with Photo 2).

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Incorporated as Nauset Plantation in 1646, and changed to Eastham in 1651, Eastham territory originally extended south to Pleasant Bay in Orleans and north beyond Wellfleet Harbor. The early development pattern for what we now know as Eastham was impacted by its absence of deep-water harbor facilities. Relatively fertile soil led to dispersed agricultural settlement, but residential and commercial development was concentrated to the north at Wellfleet Harbor and to the south at Town Cove and Pleasant Bay. When the separate towns of Wellfleet and Orleans were created in the late-18th century, Eastham became and remained one of the least populated towns on the Cape throughout the 19th century.

In the 19th century, Eastham was the agricultural center of the Outer Cape. Crops evolved over time; corn and dairy were surpassed in the early-20th century by asparagus and turnips - two crops well suited for the sandy soil. In 1900, 58% of Eastham's workers were employed as farmers, but by 1930 that number had dwindled to 21%. Summer resort development, including cottage colonies and subdivisions of former farmland that would transform Eastham, had begun in earnest in the 1920s as middle-class access to car ownership increased and Cape roads were improved.

This property is connected to the cottage development around Campground Road - one of the three earliest roads to extend west to Cape Cod Bay from the central sections of Eastham. Despite the early development of the road, which was established to serve the Methodist camp meetings in the mid-19th century, the great majority of houses that border it, especially to the north, are 20th-century vernacular summer cottages and retirement houses.

One of the early subdivisions at the west end of Campground Road was recorded in 1912 by Alonzo K. Higgins. It consisted of 34 "Cottage Lots" on the north side of Campground Road that included what is now the southern portion of Bay Road and West Shore Drive (Figure 2).¹ Four large parcels were aligned along the bay while smaller lots with 75-foot frontages were laid out in the interior. All but one of the bay parcels have been divided into smaller lots; and some of the small interior lots have been combined. Eastham-born Alonzo K. Higgins (1846-1918) married Elizabeth W. Rogers (1847-1923) in Orleans in 1870. He was listed as a farmer in census records throughout his life, but he was also very active in cottage development in the early-20th century.

A few months after the 1912 subdivision was recorded, Alonzo Higgins sold this property to Agnes F. Denison of Boston.² The parcel upon which this house sits appears to comprise Lots 22, 23 and 24 in the 1912 subdivision, but the 1912 deed and subsequent deeds do not reference the parcel numbers or the subdivision plan. The annual Eastham Tax Commitment Books can assist in identifying when owners first built their houses. This house has an Assessor date of 1930, but this house was likely built

¹ Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 2/ Page 123.

² Book 319/ Page 222.

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earlier. The Eastham Tax Books from 1903 to 1919 are missing, but starting in the 1920 Tax Book, Agnes Denison was assessed for a cottage in Eastham valued at \$800. This would mean the cottage was built sometime between 1913 and 1920. Connecticut-born Linus J. Denison (b. ca. 1872) married Agnes F. Horne (ca. 1881-1939) in Connecticut in 1900. By 1910, they were living in Boston, and he was working as a railway post office clerk. Despite having bought this Eastham property, they were living modestly in Boston.

By 1930, perhaps as a result of the Great Depression, they were listed as lodgers with no occupations. However, it was not until 1945 that Linus Denison sold this cottage to Charles L. and Edith B. Wilcox of Easton, MA.³ The 1950 census listed Charles Wilcox as a milkman. That same year, they sold this cottage to Thomas R. and Vivienne N. King of Newton.⁴ In 1977, a subsequent owner, Jane F. Charron of Wellsville, NY, sold the cottage to the current owners, Alan D. and Shirley A. Peterson of Huntsville, AL.⁵

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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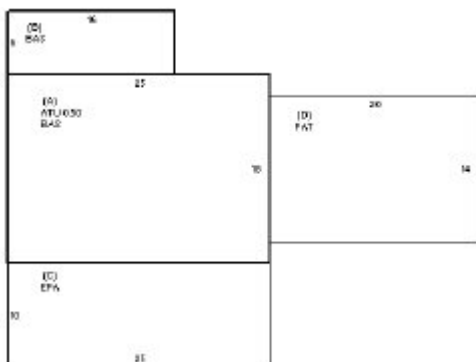


Figure 1. Assessor Sketch.



Photo 2. View looking north (2007 Assessor photo).

³ Book 625/ Page 503.

⁴ Book 71/ Page 292.

⁵ Book 2494/ Page 175.

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Photo 3. View of garage/shed, looking north.

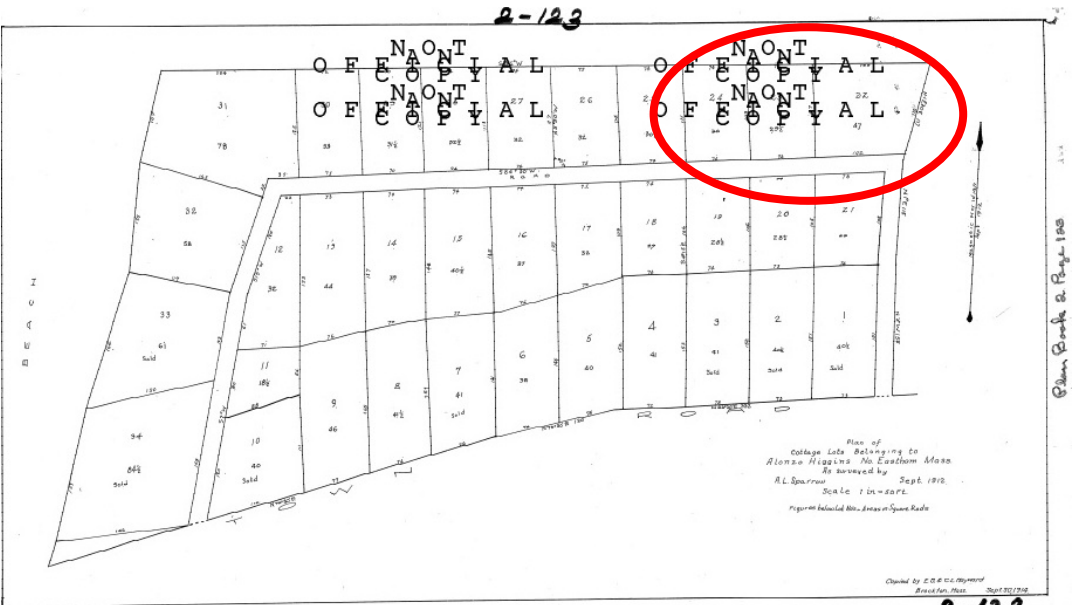


Figure 2. September 1912 Plan of Cottage Lots for Alonzo Higgins (circle of Lots 22, 23, 24 added).